



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



June 30, 2022

Mr. Brian K. Williams
Executive Director
County of Los Angeles Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
World Trade Center
350 South Figueroa Street, Suite 288
Los Angeles, California 90071

Dear Mr. Williams:

RESPONSE REGARDING IN-CUSTODY DEATHS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT FACILITIES

This correspondence is in response to the Commission's June 22, 2022, request for information regarding the Family Assistance Program; and for a status update on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (Department) implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

POSTING OF IN-CUSTODY DEATH INFORMATION

The Department whole heartedly supports increased transparency and reporting with respect to inmate deaths. Our Transparency Promise has shown, over the last four years, our commitment to sharing more data and information with the public we serve. LASD.org's Transparency Promise portal offers a wealth of data, reports, and audits available to the public more than our legal reporting requirements.

As we are sure the Commission is aware, Assembly Bill 2761 (Deaths while in law enforcement custody: reporting) was passed by the State Senate's Committee on Public Safety last week and referred to the State Senate's Committee on Appropriations. This bill mandates public reporting of in-custody deaths, including the "manner and means of death" on our website, within 10 days of an in-custody death.

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Through our Custody Compliance and Sustainability Bureau, it is our intent to post the information required in Assembly Bill 2761 within 10 days of an in-custody death through our Transparency Promise portal on LASD.org. Prior to fully implementing the reporting requirement, the Department waits for Assembly Bill 2761 to work through the State Senate, including any additional amendments. This will ensure the Department's implementation is consistent with state law, while upholding our transparency promise. We are confident once Assembly Bill 2761 is finalized, the Department will be able to implement in-custody death reporting fully and quickly in a manner consistent with the final version of Assembly Bill 2761.

The Department will share additional information, including a more specific timeline, with the Commission once Assembly Bill 2761 is finalized and has been signed by the Governor.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Consistent with our transparency pledge, the Department welcomes the opportunity to provide a comprehensive annual report on in-custody deaths to the Commission. As we are sure the Commission is aware, certain information is privileged and confidential and cannot be shared. For example, it would not be appropriate for the Department to share certain corrective action information in an annual report due to pending litigation. Outside of privileged information, we look forward to the opportunity to report back on an annual basis to the Commission on in-custody deaths.

The Department would, respectfully, ask that the deadline for an annual report be extended beyond January 31st. This will ensure we not only compile a comprehensive report that is vetted for accuracy, but also allow County Counsel the opportunity to review its content to verify information pertaining to pending litigation is not inadvertently disclosed. The Department also recommends the Commission work with the Department of Health Services to evaluate their willingness to contribute to an annual report as in-custody deaths often have a significant Correctional Health Services component that the Department would not be in the best position to comment or opine on in an annual report.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMISSION

The Department supports increased collaboration between the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Commission on the reporting on in-custody deaths. As I have stated, much of the information related to in-custody deaths

is privileged and confidential. With these limitations kept in mind, the Department is open to further discussions with respect to in-custody deaths and OIG's role in that communication.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NOTIFICATION – MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL
DEATH ON MAY 9, 2022

Homicide Bureau confirmed next-of-kin (decedent's mother) was notified on May 9, 2022. The Family Assistance Program was also notified by Homicide Bureau on May 9, 2022, at 4:36 p.m.

The Public Defender's office was notified via electronic mail. As a routine practice, "attorneys of record" are not notified. However, the Public Defender's office liaison is notified of every in-custody death.

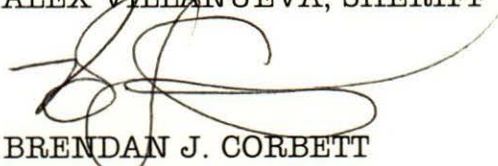
FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INTEGRATION

The Department has fully integrated notification to the Family Assistance Program (FAP) into the in-custody death investigation process. Homicide Bureau routinely notifies FAP of in-custody deaths as part of their standard procedure. While OIG and the Department of Public Health would need to speak to their respective roles, OIG does regularly follow-up with the Department with respect to next-of-kin/FAP notifications during our collaborative in-custody death review process.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Assistant Sheriff Brendan Corbett at ([REDACTED]).

Sincerely,

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



BRENDAN J. CORBETT
ASSISTANT SHERIFF